



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

Senator Gallivan Joins Colleagues in Proposing Initiatives to Alleviate Health Care Staffing Issues

JIM RANNEY October 20, 2021

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Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma) and members of the Senate Minority Conference are calling for action to help alleviate staffing issues at health care facilities and for home care patients in communities throughout New York. Staffing shortages at facilities have been exacerbated by the vaccination mandate placed on health care workers that went into effect on September 27, which has led to forced closures and reductions in services and quality of care at already under-staffed facilities.

The legislators propose to encourage and incentivize the recruitment of new health care workers, protect facilities and analyze potential workforce impacts from proposed mandates, and recruit staff in the mental health and direct care industry.

“Those who work in our health care industry have been under enormous stress over the past year and a half, but many of the challenges they face pre-date the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Senator Gallivan, ranking member of the Senate Health Committee. “This package of legislation will address several key issues, including staffing, education, patient care and funding. I urge my colleagues in the legislature to support these initiatives to help ensure New York’s health care industry is prepared to meet the needs of residents across the state.”

Included in the proposals are bills and action items to:

- Expand eligibility for STEM scholarships for students pursuing a nursing career;
- Create the Health Care Workforce Innovation Fund to support efforts to improve the health care workforce pipeline by supporting high quality training;
- Allow graduates to practice, under supervision, for 180 days until they are able to get licensed;
- Call for interstate professional licensing reciprocity to increase the supply of medical professionals;
- Ensure nursing homes are not penalized for workforce staffing shortages;
- Require an impact analysis on any new legislation or regulation on health care facilities;
- Require DOH to disclose data on staffing shortages in health care facilities;
- Direct DOH and DOL to collaborate to be aware of and address workforce shortages;
- Expand the BOCES pilot to allow for earlier entry into a career as a Direct Service Provider (DSP);
- Provide loan forgiveness as an incentive to join the health care or DSP workforce; and
- Address the state’s inadequate Medicaid reimbursement rates; and
- Direct salary increases and a statutory COLA to support the direct care workforce.

Prior to the effective date of the vaccine mandate for healthcare workers, the Senate Minority conference penned a letter to the Governor, requesting an amendment to allow for a testing alternative in order to prevent additional shortages in the already understaffed health care industry.

